

Entrepreneurship Skills Required by Technical College Graduates for Entry into Upholstery and Furniture-Making Enterprise in Lagos State

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Abstract

The study identified entrepreneurship skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State. It was a survey. The population for the study consisted of Technical College Instructors and entrepreneurs in Upholstery and Furniture-making industries. Three research questions guided the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using Mean. The findings of the study revealed 32 entrepreneurship skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise. It was recommended that the identified entrepreneurship skills be integrated into the Technical Colleges curriculum for Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates, Government should organize seminars and workshops for technical instructors on entrepreneurship skills required by Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates in Lagos State.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Skills, Technical, Colleges, Upholstery, Graduates, Enterprise.

Introduction

Technical College in Nigeria is post-primary institution that runs Vocational Education programmes and offers various vocational subjects or trades in order to equip individuals with skills knowledge and attitudes required for either paid jobs or self-employment. The trades offered in the Technical Colleges in Nigeria include: Blocklaying, Brick-laying and Concrete Work; Painting and Decorating; Plumbing and Pipe-fitting;

Carpentry and Joinery; Upholstery and Furniture-making (National Board for Technical Education, 2003).

Upholstery and Furniture-making trades are among the Woodworking Technology programmes offered in the Technical Colleges in Nigeria. Upholstery and Furniture-making in the opinion of Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2009) aimed at preparing students for jobs and employment that will reduce youth restiveness, robbery

and achieving millennium development goals. In order words, Upholstery and furniture-making training acquired in Technical Colleges are expected to expose graduates to various skills using different woodworking techniques, facilities and consumable materials in order to enable them make different types of Upholstery and Furniture-making products.

Upholstery in the view of Kayne (2003) is the work of providing furniture, especially seats with webbing, springs, padding, foams, and fabric or leather covers. Furniture is a movable household item made from wood such as: tables, chairs, shelves, cabinets in a room or patio (Nnenji, 2005). Furniture-making is the practice of using various woodworking skills to design, prepare, construct and sell or market varieties of tables, chairs, cabinets, or bed. Furniture-making in the opinion of NERDC (2009) aimed at preparing graduates for self-employment that will reduce youth restiveness, robbery and achieving millennium development goals. Undertaking business venture in Upholstery and furniture-making involves taken commercial risks in order to make a profit as self-employed.

The major problem facing youths in Lagos-Nigeria today is unemployment. In today's world of work, paid employment opportunities are difficult to come by. Ewhrudjakpor (2008) contended that the rate of poverty in Nigeria is accentuated by the increasing rate of unemployment.

Unemployment in Lagos-Nigeria, as in other developing countries, cannot be solved by simply providing training in vocational skills. It requires relevant entrepreneurship skills to trades. Osinem (2008) described a skill as expertness, practiced ability or proficiency displayed in the performance of a task. Etonyeaku (2011) argued that the rate of unemployment increasing in the society might be lack of entrepreneurship skills which might also make it difficult for youths to run their own enterprise. Interestingly, Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates from the Technical Colleges are not conscious about appropriate entrepreneurship skills required for entry into their own business enterprise.

An enterprise in the opinion of Anyakoha (2009) is a business project undertaken by an individual or a group of individuals which requires readiness and dedication on the part of the individual(s) engaged in the venture. These readiness and dedication on the part of the individual business enterprise lies on entrepreneurship development. Entrepreneurship in the view of Salami (2011) is the ability to seek investment opportunities and persisting to exploit that opportunities. A viable investment opportunities demand acquisition of required entrepreneurship skills.

Entrepreneurship skills are those activities that will enable the individuals to manage their own enterprise (Abubakar, 2010).

Entrepreneurship skills therefore, are those activities that will enable the Technical College graduates start-up and manage their own Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise successfully as self-employed. Entrepreneurship skills needed for a successful business enterprise according to Ademiluyi (2007) include: financial management skills, marketing skills, human resources skills, communication skills, and management skills. However, entrepreneurship skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in this study include: financial management skills, management skills, and marketing skills.

Financial management skills enable entrepreneurs to get fund needed on favourable terms and use them effectively (Richard, Gary & Larry, 2001). Financial management skills needed by entrepreneur for successful enterprise according to Igbo (1995) include ability to: interpret financial statement; have knowledge of accounts; have knowledge of costing; ability to understand payroll and various deductions; ability to know gross and net profit; ability to know sources of funds; know how to obtain loans; a knowledge of federal, state and local government levies, taxes and regulations; acknowledge factors involved in decision to grant loan by financial houses and many others. In other words, financial management skills will enable Upholstery and Furniture-making

graduates have knowledge of costing, interpret financial statement, get fund needed on favourable terms, and use them effectively. Potential self-employed graduates should be able to manage an enterprise.

Management skills are activities of coordinating the efforts of people to accomplish desired goals and objectives using available resources efficiently (Joshua, 2012). Management skills required of youths for managing business enterprise according to Etonyeaku (2011) include ability to: source for fund; identifying reliable source of supplies; make short/long terms planning; set goals for organizational objectives; determine the scale of production; manage time and meet job schedules. Management skills therefore, will enable Technical College graduates establish and manage Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise successfully. For successful distribution of Upholstery and Furniture-making products to customers, marketing is required for the enterprise.

Marketing skills are the abilities that keep the entrepreneur informed, knowledgeable and confident as to determine the most efficient method of physical distribution of goods and services in order to satisfy customers (Stanton, 2002). Effective marketing skills required in order to satisfy customers according to Ademiluyi (2007) include: salesmanship; negotiation; sales record keeping; sales promotion; stock record keeping; pricing; advertising channels; advertising media; consumer behavior

appreciation; and transportation. Marketing skills therefore, will enable Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates determined the most efficient method of physical distribution of goods and services to consumers.

It has been observed that the major problem facing youths in Lagos-Nigeria today is unemployment. Ewhrudjakpor (2008) acknowledged that the incidence of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria is on the high side, where 70% of the total population has been classified as poor. The author emphasized that this rate of poverty is accentuated by the increasing rate of unemployment. In the same vein, Etonyeaku (2011) argued that the rate of unemployment increasing in the society might be lack of appropriate entrepreneurship skills which might also make it difficult for youths to establish and run their own enterprise of their trades for self-employment to meet their daily needs. Consequently, a good number of them opted to constitute nuisance to the society through unskilled activities such as stealing, robbery, among others. This From the forgoing, therefore, there seems to be a gap on what entrepreneurship skills which the Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates from Technical College required to operate an enterprise for self-employment. The question now is, 'how adequate is the curriculum and module specifications content of the Technical colleges of Upholstery and Furniture-making trades in preparing the graduates to face the challenges of

unemployment and poverty. This brings to the fore, the need to identify entrepreneurship skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine entrepreneurship skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State. Specifically, the study sought to determined:

1. financial management skills required for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise.
2. managerial skills required for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise.
3. marketing skills required for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the financial management skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture -making enterprise?
2. What are the management skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise?
3. What are the marketing skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into

Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise?

Methodology

Design of the Study: The study adopted survey research design. Survey research design according to Anyakoha (2009) uses questionnaire and interview, observation, in order to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of persons of interest to the investigator. The design was considered adequate since the study obtained data from Technical College instructors and entrepreneurs in registered Upholstery and Furniture-making industries through the questionnaire.

Area of the Study: The study was carried out in Lagos metropolitan area of the South-Western zone of Nigeria, made up of 20 Local Government Areas. Lagos is a leading business empire with over 80 per cent of the total Wood-based industries in Nigeria (GeoHive, 2007). The choice of the zone was that Lagos State has a wide spread distribution of multinational, national and private industries such as Upholstery and Furniture-making industries; and many NBTE accredited Technical Colleges offering Upholstery and Furniture-making, whose entrepreneurs and instructors were used as respondents for this study.

Population for the Study: The Population for the study consisted of 252 respondents, made up of 12 technical instructors in the six Government Technical Colleges and

240 entrepreneurs in 80 registered Upholstery and Furniture-making industries in Lagos State. There was no sampling because the population is of manageable size. The choice of the respondents was because instructors were believed to be knowledgeable in Woodworking technology and entrepreneurs are trained individuals that construct or produce various types of Upholstery and Furniture-making products.

Methods of Data Collection: Two hundred and fifty-two copies of the 32-items Structured Entrepreneurship Skills Questionnaire (SESQ) were administered to the respondents in Lagos State with the help of five research assistants. All the 252 copies of the 32-items SESQ administered were retrieved and analyzed.

Method of Data Analysis: The data collected from the study were analyzed using *Mean* for answering the research questions, Any item with the *Mean* of 3.50 or above were regarded as Required; while any item with *Mean* below 3.50 was considered as Not Required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

Findings of the Study

The following findings were made:

Financial Management Skills Required by Technical College Graduates for Entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making Enterprise. Relevant data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Financial management Skills Required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise N=32

S/N	Financial Management Skills	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
	Ability to:			
1	Prepare financial statements for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.91	0.80	Required
2	Determine source of funds for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.78	0.82	Required
3	Obtain loans for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.02	0.78	Required
4	Pay government levies, taxes and regulations for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.08	0.82	Required
5	Determine what to purchase to fit into the budget for Upholstery and Furniture-making construction works.	3.96	0.81	Required
6	Prepare cost analysis in Upholstery and Furniture-making	3.83	0.81	Required
7	Prepare a simple budget for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.10	0.70	Required
8	Procure appropriate facilities for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.01	0.84	Required
9	Procure appropriate consumable-materials for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.07	0.78	Required
10	Make purchasing needs record/compare services for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.02	0.82	Required
11	Keep purchase records for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.00	0.79	Required

Table 1 reveals that all the 11 financial management skills items had their *Mean* value ranged from 3.78 to 4.10 on items numbers 2 and 7 respectively; and were, therefore, found required by Technical College graduates for

entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

Management Skills Required by Technical College Graduates for Entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making Enterprise. Relevant data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Managerial Skills Required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making Enterprise N = 32

S/N	Managerial Skills	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to: Plan for enterprise goals and objectives in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.00	0.79	Required
2	Implement business plan for goal attainment in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.98	0.84	Required
3	Provide good leadership networking in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.80	0.83	Required
4	Organize resources for goal attainment in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.86	0.81	Required
5	Direct functions of construction operations in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.03	0.78	Required
6	Delegate tasks in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.07	0.84	Required
7	Coordinates activities of construction operations in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.96	0.83	Required
8	Supervise construction operations in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.95	0.83	Required
9	Work under pressure in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.29	0.77	Required
10	Evaluate all operations for goals attainment in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.01	0.79	Required

Table 2 shows that all the 10 management skills items had their *Mean* value above 3.80. The study therefore, found that 10 management skills were required by Technical College graduates for entry into

Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

Marketing Skills Required by Technical College Graduates for Entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making Enterprise. Relevant data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Marketing Skills required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise N = 32

S/N	Marketing Skills	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1	Ability to: Analyze marketing opportunities in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.01	0.80	Required
2	Identify marketing channels in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.91	0.86	Required
3	Conduct market studies/survey to determine customers for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.06	0.78	Required
4	Keep appropriate records and inventories for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.87	0.88	Required
5	Stimulate customers to buy finished Upholstery products and Furniture-items.	3.96	0.83	Required
6	Advertise through social media and Search Engine effectively for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.03	0.80	Required
7	Decide on marketing mix (the 4Ps) for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	4.01	0.84	Required
8	Promote products/items to targeted clients for Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.68	0.80	Required
9	Organize regular market exhibitions for finished Upholstery and Furniture-making products.	3.79	0.84	Required
10	Develop effective distribution network for Upholstery and furniture-making.	4.02	0.85	Required
11	Transport finished products to targeted buyers/customers in Upholstery and Furniture-making.	3.91	0.88	Required

Table 3 shows that all the 11 marketing skill items had their *Mean* value ranged from 3.68 to 4.06 based on items numbers 8 and 3 respectively. This implies that 11 marketing skills were required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

Discussions of the Findings

The findings of this study revealed that 11 financial management skills were required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State. These financial management skills include ability to: prepare financial statements for Upholstery and Furniture-making; determine source of funds for Upholstery and Furniture-making;

obtain loans for Upholstery and Furniture-making; pay government levies, taxes and regulations for Upholstery and Furniture-making; determine what to purchase to fit into the budget for Upholstery and Furniture-making construction works; prepare cost analysis in Upholstery and Furniture-making; prepare a simple budget for Upholstery and Furniture-making; procure appropriate facilities for Upholstery and Furniture-making; procure appropriate consumable-materials for Upholstery and Furniture-making; make purchasing needs record/compare services for Upholstery and Furniture-making; and keep purchase records for Upholstery and Furniture-making.

The findings supported the opinion of Olagunju (2004) who observed that financial management skills needed by entrepreneurs to get fund needed on favourable terms and use them effectively include ability to: provide information useful to investors and evaluating potential cash flows to them in terms of amount, timing and related uncertainty; provide users with information for predicting, comparing and evaluating enterprise earning power; permit prompt filling of report and tax collecting agencies; and reveal all possible employee frauds, wastes, thefts and record keeping errors. The findings were in consonance with the view of Igbo (1995) who observed that entrepreneurs should be able to: interpret financial statement; prepare financial statements; understand

payroll and various deductions; know gross and net profit; know sources of funds; pay government levies, taxes and regulations; acknowledge factors involved in decision to grant loan by financial houses. These findings also agreed with the view of Richard, et. al., (2001) who stated that financial management skills needed by entrepreneur to understand the financial matters include ability to: process accounts payable and accounts receivable; process inventories; prepare ledgers and extract the trial balance; prepare daily cash reports; prepare bank reconciliation statements; keep sales and purchases records; keep debtors ledgers; prepare final accounts, profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet; calculate depreciation; avoid unplanned expenditures and to prepare simple budget. The findings of the authors on financial management skills gave credence to the findings of this study on financial management skills required for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

The findings of this study revealed that 10 management skills were required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos state. These management skills include ability to: plan for enterprise goals and objectives in Upholstery and Furniture-making; Implement business plan for goal attainment in Upholstery and Furniture-making; provide good leadership networking in Upholstery and Furniture-making;

organize resources for goal attainment in Upholstery and Furniture-making; direct functions of construction operations in Upholstery and Furniture-making; delegate tasks in Upholstery and Furniture-making; coordinates activities of construction operations in Upholstery and Furniture-making; supervise construction operations in Upholstery and Furniture-making; work under pressure in Upholstery and Furniture-making; and evaluate all operations for goals attainment in Upholstery and Furniture-making.

The findings were in line with the opinion of Etonyeaku (2011) who noted that management skills required of youths for managing business enterprise include ability to: identifying reliable source of supplies; make short/long terms planning; setting goals for organizational objectives; determine the scale of production; manage time and meet job schedules. The findings supported the opinion of Zuzana, (2007) who stated that the basic management skills required by business related entrepreneur in starting, developing and managing an enterprise include: problem solving and decision making, planning, meeting management, delegation, communications, and managing oneself. This finding also agreed with the opinion of Joshua (2012) who reported that management skills are activities of coordinating the efforts of people to accomplish desired goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively. The findings and the opinions of

authors above helped to justify the findings of this study on management skill-items required for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State.

The findings of this study revealed that 11 marketing skills were required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State. These marketing skills include ability to: analyze marketing opportunities in Upholstery and Furniture-making; identify marketing channels in Upholstery and Furniture-making; conduct market studies/survey to determine customers for Upholstery and Furniture-making; keep appropriate records and inventories for Upholstery and Furniture-making; stimulate customers to buy finished Upholstery products and Furniture-items; advertise through social media and Search Engine effectively for Upholstery and Furniture-making; decide on marketing mix (the 4Ps) for Upholstery and Furniture-making; promote products/items to targeted clients for Upholstery and Furniture-making; organize regular market exhibitions for finished Upholstery and Furniture-making products ; develop effective distribution network for Upholstery and furniture-making; and transport finished products to targeted buyers/customers for Upholstery and Furniture-making were in agreement with the work of Obiyai and Ekubo (2011) who argued that skills in marketing include: advertise products; identify customers to patronize; maintain good

customer relationship; keep record of sales and revenue; transport products to buyers; provide good leadership and networking; fix moderate and competitive prices; review prices; periodically suit current market situation; recognize business opportunities; and identify market channels.

The findings were in consonance with the work of Ademiluyi (2007) who opined that entrepreneur should have knowledge of salesmanship; negotiation; sales record keeping; sales promotion; stock record keeping; pricing; advertising channels; advertising media; consumer behaviour appreciation; and transportation. This finding also agreed with work of Stanton (2002) who argued that marketing skills that positioned entrepreneur in contact with the people who want to buy ones' products and services include ability to: identify marketing areas; advertise; fix prices based on cost of production & market situation; sell products; and keep accurate record of products. The findings and the opinions of authors on marketing skills above helped to add value to the findings of this study on marketing skill-items required for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that three entrepreneurship skills such as: financial management skills, management skills and marketing

with their 32 corresponding skill-items were required by Technical College graduates for entry into Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise in Lagos State. These skills if packaged into curriculum and module specifications for Technical College graduates training, they will be able to set-up and run their own Upholstery and Furniture-making enterprise as self-employed. Consequently, the problems of unemployment and poverty among Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates will be reduced or eliminated in Lagos State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Identified entrepreneurship skills should be integrated into Technical College curriculum and module specifications for Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates.
2. Relevant, quality and functional facilities and consumable material should be supply to various Technical Colleges for teaching entrepreneurship skills to Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates,
3. Government and administrators of Technical Colleges should organize seminar and workshop for Upholstery and Furniture-making instructors on entrepreneurship skills required by Upholstery and Furniture-making graduates in Lagos State.

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